

HANDLING STRESS . . . NUTRITION TIPS

Good nutrition can increase your ability to manage stress.

Poor nutrition could lead to fatigue, weakness, and a reduced ability to concentrate. Healthy eating helps you fight off colds and infection.

Here are some tips that will help to keep you at your best when dealing with stress. Check (✓) those that you want to work on and put this list on your refrigerator today as a reminder.

- ☐ **Eat Right!** Eat regular meals – 3 times a day. Use the food guide pyramid to help you choose.
- ☐ **Control portion sizes.** Avoid eating too much or too little. For some, stress makes them want to snack all day; while others don't want to eat at all.
- ☐ **Eat Breakfast.** Start your day off with a healthy breakfast each morning to give you the energy you need to face the day's challenges.
- ☐ **Think ahead . . .** So that healthy foods are available to prepare for meals and snacks. Make a shopping list and stick to it.
- ☐ **Limit calorie-loaded “comfort” foods.** Although some foods may bring back happy memories, over consumption may cause you to feel guilty.

Other Things to Remember

- ☐ **Eat 5 A Day For Better Health.** Try to eat at least 5 servings of vegetables and fruits every day.
- ☐ **Go easy on the caffeine.** Too much caffeine can contribute to feelings of anxiety. Try gradually reducing caffeine by drinking decaffeinated coffee or tea and caffeine free soft drinks. Choose fruit and vegetable juices, fat-free or lowfat milk, and water as beverages.
- ☐ **Avoid high doses of vitamins.** Vitamin pills can't relieve stress. One “regular” vitamin/mineral supplement that contains 100% of the daily value (DV) may improve your overall health. Megadoses of vitamins (10 times the DV), could be dangerous.
- ☐ **Be careful with herbal products.** Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist before using products that claim to relieve stress.

Before stress gets the best of you--

Find Help!

- ✓ Share your feelings with someone you trust. This person might be a friend, relative or clergy.
- ✓ Talk to your health care provider, a social worker or a mental health professional.
- ✓ You can also find help by calling the National Institute of Mental Health Information Line at 1-800-647-2642 or visiting their website at www.nimh.nih.gov.
- ✓ In your local community, contact “First Call for Help” hotline (check white pages for local number) or call the local mental health center.